DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 428 160 UD 032 840

AUTHOR	Coberly, Patricia
TITLE	Innovative Programs To Insure Diversity in Public Education.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	6p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	College School Cooperation; *Cultural Awareness; *Diversity (Student); *Educational Innovation; Higher Education; Junior High Schools; Middle Schools; *Multicultural Education; Program Descriptions; Public Schools; School Districts; *Teacher Certification; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	*Armstrong Atlantic State University GA; Georgia; Savannah State College GA

ABSTRACT

At Armstrong Atlantic State University a number of programs have been developed in collaboration with the University System of Georgia and the Savannah-Chatham County Public School District to increase cultural diversity in the classroom and to focus on creating a diverse population of successful learners that mirrors the cultural diversity of the community. The Postsecondary Readiness Enrichment Program assists middle school students and their parents in making decisions about higher education. The Sister-to-Sister Summit gives female junior high school students the opportunity to share concerns and develop plans for positive change in their lives. Savannah State University and Armstrong Atlantic University have collaborated on a cooperative teacher certification program. Another on-campus program is the Pathways to Teaching Program supported at a number of colleges and universities. (Contains seven references.) (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Innovative Programs to Insure Diversity in Public Education

By Patricia Coberly
Armstrong Atlantic State University

ED 428 160

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Patricia Coberly
Armstrong Atlantic State Univ.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

UD 032840

Innovative Programs to Insure Diversity in Public Education

Patricia Coberly
Armstrong Atlantic State University

Urban schools are currently experiencing challenges that are rapidly on the rise. Teacher turnover, student mobility, dropout rates and absenteeism are high in our urban schools, all of which lead to serious social problems. How do we handle these challenges? Bissex is so accurate when she states, "The logic by which we teach is not always the logic by which children learn," (Atwell, 1987). Who is better equipped to understand and provide insight to the problems and offer solutions than those who live and work in the community and share the same values and customs as the students they teach.

According to Evelyn Dandy (personal communication, 1997), by the year 2000 only 5% to 6% of teachers will be minorities, yet African-American students will be the majority in urban schools. From 1992-1994 Savannah-Chatham Public Schools hired 410 teachers, only 22% of this number were minority females and 7% were minority males. Dandy goes on to state that not only in Savannah, but nationally, minority males represent the smallest number of teachers, but the largest percentage of students who are retained, suspended or drop out of school.

In the past few years we have seen federal court rulings and political battles chip away at affirmative action programs instituted to ensure cultural diversity in the classroom. At Armstrong Atlantic State University in collaboration with the University System of Georgia and the Savannah-Chatham County Public School District a number of programs have been developed in an effort to increase cultural diversity in the classroom and focus on creating a diverse population of successful learners that mirrors the culturally diverse population of our community. The areas we are currently placing our focus toward are the middle school student and the college student.

Postsecondary Readiness Enrichment Program (PREP)

The University of Georgia, in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education, has developed the Georgia Post-Secondary Readiness Enrichment Program (PREP) which is funded with a combination of public and private support. The goal of this program is to assist middle-school students and their parents in making timely and informed decisions about higher education and future career choices for the student. It is a part of the High Hopes for College for America's Youth initiative, which can be found around the United States under a variety of titles, such as *The Early Scholars Outreach Program, Advancement Via Individual Determination and Campus Partners Mentoring Program.*

The program, which targets at-risk students, attempts to guide them toward admission in post-secondary institutions - colleges, universities and technical schools. Partnerships are promoted between colleges and middle schools in low-income communities, to provide children with the support they need starting in sixth or seventh grade and continuing through high school graduation (Ed Home, 1998). College students are enlisted to provide morning, after-school and Saturday one-on-one or group mentoring. It also involves providing information about what it takes to go to college to parents and students, as well as support services in the form of workshops and mentoring, such as assisting students who may need academic intervention and other support systems to meet heightened admission requirements which will go into effect in Georgia in 2001.

UD 032840

Sister-to-Sister Summit

In collaboration with the Savannah branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), AASU held the first annual sister-to-sister summit this year. The goal of the summit was to allow girls to talk about their fears, frustrations, dreams, and ideas with other girls. With the assistance of AAUW members, a steering committee of five middle grades girls spent almost one year planning the summit.

Forty-three seventh- and eighth-grade girls from area public and private schools gathered to share their concerns and to develop their agenda for positive change in their lives. The topics chosen by the girls included: teen pregnancy, violence, and "Who Am I?" By the end of the day the girls developed action plans that will help them overcome the barriers they face and; hopefully, spark change for schools and communities.

Students at this age are going through many changes, both physically and emotionally. These changes can become so overwhelming and distracting that they can affect an adolescent's learning. Those who worked on this program came away excited and feeling that they had made a difference. Next year's planning has already begun and a session for boys is on the agenda.

AASU / SSU Middle School Education Collaborative

Another program developed to add to the student diversity of both AASU and SSU (a historically black university) is a cooperative teacher certification program, The Preparation of Minority Teachers - A Collaborative Effort. One of the main purposes of this initiative is to enhance the partnership between the two schools and increase the number of African American Teacher Education students in the area Middle Schools - an area where we are experiencing a critical shortage in the state of Georgia.

The program started out as one in which students could earn a bachelor's degree from Savannah State University and receive a recommendation for teacher certification from Armstrong Atlantic State University in six content areas in secondary education, plus art and music and middle grades education. Courses by AASU have been offered on the SSU campus since 1992; however, it was suggested that many students were not aware of the program. The collaborative program was instituted in 1995 and involved a supportive academic home on the Savannah State University campus, with the hiring of a full-time advisor / professor housed on that campus. Today, there are two full-time advisors / professors on the campus and one part-time advisor. We are to the point that at least one section of almost every course is taught at the SSU campus each semester, with many students attending both campuses for classes.

Pathways to Teaching Program

A third program on the AASU campus is the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund's Pathways to Teaching Program. For nearly ten years, the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund has been at the forefront of efforts to develop better ways to recruit and train a diverse corps of teachers ready for the challenges and rewards of working in hard-to-staff public schools in low-income urban and rural communities across the nation (Focus: Pathways, 1997). The mission of this program is to increase the number of certified teachers in low-income urban and rural public school districts that have difficulty recruiting highly qualified teachers.

Noncertified teachers, paraprofessionals and returned Peace Crops volunteers which are employed by the Board of Education are recruited, screened and selected as Scholars, primarily minorities, and are provided with a curriculum and support designed to facilitate their graduation and subsequent professional certification. Between 1989 and 1996, the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund has invested $40 million in its Pathways to Teaching Careers Program. The program includes 66 colleges and universities located in 47 cities and 28 states. As of 1996, over 3,000 Scholars, serving more than 100,000 students annually, have received educational support (Gala Premiere Showing of the National Education Association's *The Drive to Teach,* 1996).

In 1995 the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund began supporting the Pathways to Teaching Program in the Savannah-Chatham County Area. The three parties involved in this endeavor are: Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah State University, and the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools.

The support available to Scholars includes: 80 percent tuition scholarships; orientation sessions for the Scholar, tutorials, workshops, networking mentoring editorial assistance, etc. Scholars are also obligated to sign a contract to teach in the Chatham County Public Schools for a minimum of three years.

The Savannah based program has been a success. In a department meeting on August 14, 1998, Dr. Dandy (personal communication) reported that 48 students have graduated from the program and 44 are employed. Last year 12 scholars received the "First Year Teacher of the Year" award. Five are enrolled in a M.Ed. program, one in a Ph.D. program, and one more has applied for admission to a Ph.D. program. Another has attended the Oxford program on a scholarship, and one has been appointed as an assistant principal. According to AASU vice-president and dean of faculty, Dr. Frank Butler, six of these Scholars have been nominated for the Sallie Mae First Year Teacher Award, and one scholar was nominated for his school's Teacher of the Year Award (personal communication, January 22, 1998).

Summary

Opportunities are accessible to create an educational population which mirrors the cultural diversity of the community. The efforts of Armstrong Atlantic State University to diversify the student body has been successful, without the use of quotas. The enrollment and ensuing program completion by minority students have increased dramatically from 18 student teachers and interns in 1991-92 to 70 in 1995-96 and to 75 in 1997-98. The College of Education at Armstrong Atlantic State University was first in the state among majority institutions in number of minority students enrolled in student teaching and leads all institutions when minority teaching interns are included (Newberry, 1995).

Bibliography

Atwell, N. (1987). In the middle: Writing, reading, and learning with adolescents. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Ed Home (1998). HIGH HOPES for College for America's Youth. Available: http://inet.ed.gov/offices/OPE/PPI/highhopes.html. Accessed 17 September, 1998.

Fields, C.D. (1997). Surveying the battleground in the fight for access. *Black Issues in Higher Education, 14*(6), 28-29.

Focus: Pathways (1997). A periodic report on grantmaking programs of the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. *DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, Autumn.*

Healey, P. (1997). A lawsuit against Georgia University System attacks a range of race-based policies. *The Chronicle of Higher Education, 43*(27), A25-A26.

Minnaert, K.J. (1998). Diversity is the key to education at SPSCC. *The Olympian.* Available: http://www.inform.umd.edu/diversityweb/Digest/Sm98/media.html#opportunity Accessed 17 September, 1998.

Newberry, S.L. (1995). AACTE/NCATE Institutional Data (JDCS Form B - Enrollment, Productivity, Faculty, Resources). Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.